

# Final Report

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Attorney General's  
Advisory Commission  
on Camden's Public Safety

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**September 2006**

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## **Preface**

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Policing in urban America is a far more complex set of activities than most people recognize. To many citizens, the police are simply crime fighters whose responsibility is to protect people's safety and property, and to enhance the public's sense of security. Most people give little, if any, thought to the myriad of other basic responsibilities that the police discharge on a daily basis, including preserving order in the community, guaranteeing the movement of pedestrian and vehicular traffic, protecting and extending the rights of persons to speak and assemble freely, and providing assistance for those who cannot assist themselves. Thus, a view that police officers are simply "crime-fighters" ignores the broad nature of their function.

Because the police department is the only agency on the streets of the city twenty-four hours a day, handling a wide range of complex problems, the police come to represent the "government" to many citizens. Often then, communities unfairly view police as responsible for conditions that the agency has neither the resources nor the authority to address. At the same time, local government often compounds the problem by assigning to the police responsibility for newly defined priorities, all the while expecting the police to fulfill their primary responsibility of addressing conditions of crime and disorder.

Given this environment, police officers require a wide set of skills to negotiate this range of complexities. Many police organizations have recognized that effective policing requires an understanding of the communities that they serve, sophisticated training, a passion for improving the quality of life for those who reside in these urban areas, and strong leadership. The creation of a cadre of effective, capable leadership requires police departments to design and implement a new model of professional development consistent with the recommended reforms.

Camden has long had its share of problems and issues as its police department has struggled to meet the challenges of its environment. As concerns over police effectiveness emerged, numerous studies of the Department identified areas where the police function could be strengthened. In 2004, following the designation of Camden as America's most unsafe city, the New Jersey Attorney General appointed the Camden Commission on Public Safety. The charge to the Commission was simple: identify a strategy for moving Camden toward becoming an effective, first class law enforcement agency.

The membership of the Commission was diverse and experienced, reflecting the Camden community, its criminal justice system and experts in policing reform. Membership on the Commission included: Thomas O' Reilly, former Administrator of the New Jersey Department of Law and Public Safety; Colonel Joseph Fuentes, Superintendent of the New Jersey State Police; Dr. George Kelling, faculty Chair of the Police Institute at Rutgers University/Newark; Jeffrey Brenner, M.D., and Sharon Miller,



both residents of Camden; Edwin Figueroa, the Camden Chief of Police (*retired*), Vincent Sarubbi, the former Camden County Prosecutor, and Janet J. Lennon, former Deputy Commissioner for Legal Matters for the New York City Police Department. At the request of the Attorney General, I served as the Commission's Chairman.

The Commission was assisted by a small staff. Robert Wasserman, a national police consultant, served as Staff Director. The Commission was also assisted by Dr. Wayne Fisher of the Police Institute and John Shane, a retired Captain from the Newark Police Department.

It is not possible to mention all those persons, including many of the Department's civilian and uniformed employees, who assisted the Commission and its staff in its work. Particular note, however, must be made of Vincent Sarubbi, the former Camden County Prosecutor who, finding himself responsible for department oversight under Supercession, energetically collaborated with Commission members and staff to develop this report's comprehensive strategy.

I would also like to thank Mayor Gwendolyn Faison and Chief Operating Officer Randy Primas for their commitment and understanding of how important public safety is to the revitalization of Camden. Their partnership and cooperation with the Police Department is critical to the recommended reforms, and their ability to engage the community in the reform process will be critical to its success.

No question remains that the Camden Police Department needs to implement major reforms if it is to become an effective, high-performing organization. While some officers in the Department have resisted any attempts at reform in an effort to protect the status quo, a substantial number of the Department's officers understand the need for reform, for implementation of new systems and strategies, and for effective leadership at the highest levels. These officers are the future of the Department and their embrace of the reforms in this report represents the Department's best opportunity for success. Without implementation of the basic reforms recommended by the Commission, the Camden Police Department will remain in a state of crisis, unable to meet the substantial policing challenges of the Camden community.

**Charles Rogovin, *Chair***  
September 2006



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## Introduction

In November 2004, Morgan Quitno, a company that compiles and sells lists of “best and worst” on a variety of issues, identified Camden, New Jersey as America’s most dangerous city. At that time, there was no question that Camden was facing a substantial and ever-escalating crime problem and that Camden’s Police Department, despite its substantial efforts, was facing very difficult challenges in dealing with that problem.

While Camden had once been a vibrant metropolis with a thriving economy, the passage of time had seen a decline in jobs, industry, and population, paired with deterioration of the city’s infrastructure and the soaring crime rate. Ultimately, the outflow of industry and the declining tax base left the city in dire financial straits, with insufficient revenues to support adequate city government operations, including the provision of police services. With a dramatically low secondary school graduation rate and little industry remaining in the city to provide jobs for its residents, Camden became the center of the drug trade in southern New Jersey, a circumstance exacerbated by its close proximity to Philadelphia. Given Camden’s condition, its Morgan Quitno designation as America’s most dangerous city in 2004 was not without basis.

Over the past twenty years, and on numerous occasions, Camden required and received state assistance to stem the tide of crime that was steadily engulfing the city. The State’s involvement in Camden has ranged from auditing of the police department to deploying State law enforcement officers within the city. As far back as 1986, then-Mayor Randy Primas was forced to resort to requesting the assistance of the New Jersey Attorney General to address what had become a crisis of crime in the city. In response, the New Jersey Division of Criminal Justice conducted a review of the management and operations of the Police Department. That study resulted in more than 150 recommendations designed to improve the quality and delivery of police services.<sup>1</sup>

In 1992 and 1993, State and County law enforcement agencies lent their support to Camden and deployed their own personnel to take over specified non-patrol tasks from Camden police officers. In 1996, the Attorney General again conducted a review of the operations of the Camden Police Department and again made numerous recommendations to improve the overall delivery of police services to the city and its citizens.<sup>2</sup> In 1998, the Attorney General conducted follow-up reviews to assess the Department’s progress in implementing those recommendations. Based upon that review, the Attorney General determined that the Camden Police Department had failed to take the steps necessary to improve deployment of primary response units and was not effectively utilizing personnel resources. To address these deficiencies, the Attorney General directed that the Camden County Prosecutor serve as the “monitor” of the Camden Police Department, an assignment that continues to date.<sup>3</sup>

In 2002, at the direction of the Governor, the Attorney General undertook yet another review of the police operations in Camden and, based upon that review, determined yet again that the Camden Police Department had failed in its duty and responsibility to provide adequate police services.<sup>4</sup> At that time, then Governor James McGreevey ordered the New

1. Department of Law & Public Safety, Division of Criminal Justice, A Management Study of the Camden Police Department: Executive Summary (1987).

2. Division of Criminal Justice, Report on the Camden Police Department, Mar. 1996.

3. Letter from Peter G. Verniero, Attorney General, to Lee A. Solomon, Camden County Prosecutor (November 12, 1998).

4. Department of Law & Public Safety, Division of Criminal Justice, Report on the Camden Police Department (June 2002).

Jersey State Police to provide direct support to the Camden Police Department. In response, the State Police Superintendent created and implemented the Anti-Crime Partnership Program, and assigned 93 State Police personnel to Camden. In addition, other state and federal law enforcement agencies intensified their presence in Camden and joined in this effort to assist the city.

Despite these extraordinary efforts, by 2003, it was clear that police effectiveness in Camden was at an all-time low. In response to this latest crisis and the apparent lack of willingness of the Department's leadership to adopt the changes necessary to address the crisis appropriately and effectively, the Attorney General took the step of placing the Police Department under "supercession," and appointed the County Prosecutor as the managing authority for the Department.<sup>5</sup> Under supercession, which remains in effect today, the Prosecutor oversees strategic initiatives of the Department and is the final decision-maker for all administrative and management changes that the Department seeks to make.<sup>6</sup> The supercession of the Camden Police Department exists in the broader context of the current State oversight of municipal government functions in the City of Camden undertaken pursuant to the "Municipal Rehabilitation and Economic Recovery Act" of 2002. (*See N.J.S.A. 52:27BBB-1, et seq.*)

In the face of worsening crime statistics that led to Camden's designation in November 2004 as America's most dangerous city, in early 2005, then-New Jersey Attorney General Peter C. Harvey appointed the Camden Commission on Public Safety, and charged the Commission with responsibility to identify those structural and organizational changes the Department would have to make to reduce violence and serious crimes in the city.<sup>7</sup> As their resumes indicate, the members of the Commission have extensive and varied experience and expertise in law enforcement. The Commission also includes members of the public, ensuring that it would take into consideration a broad range of interests and issues.

In appointing the Commission, the Attorney General noted that, while the problems of crime in Camden were not exclusively the responsibility of the Police Department, it was clear that the Department had a major role in the efforts to appropriately address crime issues. To perform this role, the Department needed to take steps to ensure that its operations reflected national best practices. Thus, the Commission was to focus on developing strategies to enhance police effectiveness and to broaden and strengthen the impact of the Department's previous efforts so that they would have lasting, positive impact on reducing crime in the city.

The Commission began its review while the Police Department continued its own efforts to improve policing techniques and strategies. Pursuant to the Supercession Order, under the guidance of the Prosecutor, and with the assistance of allied law enforcement agencies, the Department developed and implemented a new crime-control strategy. The New Jersey State Police, the U.S. Marshal's Office, and other State and federal agencies assigned substantial additional resources to Camden. This cooperative effort, known as the 28-day plan, had a substantial positive impact, reducing the crime rate dramatically during the first months of its implementation. It was clear that, with the appropriate strategies, resources, and assistance, the Department could positively impact Camden's crime rate.

5. Letter from Peter C. Harvey, Attorney General, to Vincent C. Sarubbi, Camden County Prosecutor (March 17, 2003).

6. *Id.*

7. Letter from Peter C. Harvey, Attorney General, to Michael L. Wagers, Executive Director, Police Institute (January 4, 2005).

*This report presents  
the Commission's  
recommendations for  
improved police operations  
and public safety in Camden*

However, it also soon became clear that the Department could not maintain this aggressive enforcement indefinitely and could not sustain the benefits of its new strategies on its own without structural change. The Commission's preliminary analysis of crime statistics for the first six months of 2006 indicate that the reduction in crime produced by the 28-day plan was temporary. Compared to the first six months of 2005, overall crime in 2006 increased by 11.5%. Reported occurrences of both rape and robbery were higher in 2006 than in the corresponding period in 2005, and property crimes increased by 18.4% in the same period. The Department's efforts, including increased geographic accountability, have, to its credit, contributed to a substantial reduction in murders and aggravated assaults compared to 2005.<sup>8</sup> While these changes are encouraging, we note that the city's rate of violent crime remains unacceptably high at more than six times the State's rate of violent crime.<sup>9</sup> Indeed, for what it is worth, Camden retained its ranking as America's most dangerous city in Morgan Quitno's 2005 report.

The Commission recognizes that for decades, the Department has lacked the financial resources to carry out its mission. Just as troubling however, the Commission found that for decades also, the Department has lacked the motivation and resolve, and, at times, the leadership necessary to develop and nurture the external relationships with the community, or to implement and sustain the internal organizational structures necessary to impact crime in the city. The Department's organization into distinct, functional divisions, in effect "silos," has wasted and under-utilized its most important resource—its uniformed officers. Most importantly, the Department lacks a critical component of a modern and effective police system: an operation designed around a true and strong partnership with the community it serves.

This report presents the Commission's recommendations for improved police operations and public safety in Camden. The recommended reforms are not solely the responsibility of the Police Department: the community, the city's leadership, and the State's leaders all must act decidedly and expeditiously to implement the changes here recommended if the citizens of Camden are to receive the quality police services they demand and deserve. The reforms discussed in this report must be undertaken immediately if the Camden Police Department is to move forward to meet the demands of a city in desperate need. While this list is by no means inclusive of everything that should and/or could be done to mount a successful campaign against crime in the city, nevertheless, it does present the basic elements of a strategy to modernize and improve the Department and the delivery of police services to the public. So too, these recommendations will bring the Department into line with standard national best practices. The recommended reforms will undoubtedly involve substantial changes—change in practices, change in thinking, and change in the overall culture of the Police Department. However, it is abundantly clear that change immediate and drastic, is exactly what Camden needs. Its citizens as well as the Department itself deserve no less.

8. These calculations are based on crime statistics provided by the Camden Police Department.

9. Office of the Attorney General, New Jersey Department of Law & Public Safety, Crime in New Jersey: 2005 Uniform Crime Report (August 8, 2006).

## Needed Reforms - Steps Forward For the Future

The reforms detailed below encompass significant changes for the Department and its relationship with the community. They call for a fundamental restructuring of the Department: the discarding of the methods that have proven ineffective, and the implementation of new structures and relationships that will allow the dedicated members of the Department to better do their job. The reforms if implemented with all deliberate speed, will allow the Department to improve internal systems and communications, collaborate with the community in a meaningful way, and prepare its officers to adopt modern policing techniques in the community. These reforms will not happen through a piecemeal approach; rather, the Department must develop a Strategic Plan for the timely implementation of these recommendations and reforms. The Department's leadership and each of its members must mobilize to put the needed reforms in place now.

The Commission recommends that supercession remain in place until the reforms are implemented and tested. If the Department at all levels embraces these reforms, develops a strategic plan to implement them, and commits itself fully to their success, the Department will be able to eliminate the need for supercession oversight. The duration of supercession depends on the Department: if it responds to these recommendations with the same cultural resistance to improvement that has stymied so many prior attempts at reform, supercession will continue indefinitely. If, on the other hand, the Department works to transform itself into a modern law enforcement agency, with the internal systems and external relationships that are commonplace today in successful law enforcement agencies, the Department will emerge from supercession as a far superior and effective police force. The Commission recommends that, twice a year, the Prosecutor report to the Attorney General on the Department's progress in implementing the strategic plan and on the results of the same. The report should include analysis of crime statistics and such other factors as will permit the Attorney General to make an informed decision on when outside supervision of the Police Department should be discontinued.

The Commission recommends the reforms discussed below. The recommended reforms fall into three major categories. First, and as predicates for the other reforms, the Commission recommends three major changes to the management and leadership structure of the Department. (See *Section IIA, below.*) Second, the Commission recommends several reforms necessary for the development of a community policing approach to crime control. (See *Section IIB, below.*) Third, the Commission recommends changes to the Department's internal organizational structure. (See *Section IIC, below.*) Taken together, the Commission's recommendations will transform and reform the Department for the best.

### A. Management / Leadership Reforms

- Create a full-time civilian Police Director position.

The City of Camden must create a full-time Police Director position. The current delegation of the supervisory responsibilities to the City's Business Administrator has proven inadequate. Implementation will require change in the governing municipal ordinances. The position of Police Direc-

Create a full-time civilian  
Police Director position.

*Enact the legislative changes required to allow the Mayor to select a police chief from a larger pool*

tor should be filled with a civilian, giving the City and the Department considerable flexibility in appointing the most qualified applicant. As in other municipalities that have adopted this position, the police director would be responsible for (a) setting department-wide policy, (b) issuing the rules and regulations that govern the department, (c) establishing the table of organization, and (d) making all decisions concerning the hiring, firing, and promotion of Department personnel. The Commission notes that every other major city in New Jersey, with the exception of Atlantic City, has a full-time police director who is charged with the responsibility to perform these functions.

- Enact the legislative changes required to allow the Mayor to select a police chief from a larger pool of qualified applicants.

The State Legislature should allow Camden's elected officials the authority to consider a broader pool of applicants in choosing the police chief. The Legislature has enacted laws that grant the mayors of Newark and Jersey City the ability to appoint a police chief of their choosing, provided the candidate selected has experience as a superior officer and at least five years of administrative-supervisory experience. (See N.J.S.A. 40:69A-60.7.) This method of selecting a police chief has many benefits. First, it provides the mayor broader discretion and greater choice in the selection process. Second, it expands the group of eligible candidates and allows the mayor to choose from among a larger pool of individuals with the best qualifications to lead the police department. Third, it further increases the accountability of the department to the people and the elected officials. Camden would benefit greatly if it had this type of flexibility in selecting a police chief.

- Leave the position of police chief unfilled until existing leadership resources in the department are more fully developed and the legislative change recommended above is in place.

The City should not fill the current vacancy in the police chief position until two conditions are met. First, the enactment of the legislative change discussed above. Second, further development of managerial and leadership capability in the Department, a process that will take some time. If the City were to fill the chief position now, it would be restricted by the rules currently in effect for the selection process to filling the position from within the ranks of the Department. Although the existing mid- and upper-level management in the Department has clear leadership potential, the Commission is of the opinion that no one individual within those ranks is, at this time, ready to lead the Department in the implementation of the significant reforms detailed in this report. Leaving the position vacant for a while will provide time for the existing core of potential executive leadership in the Department to develop more fully, as well as allow the State adequate time to enact the legislation discussed above. Continuing the temporary vacancy in the police chief position will allow for the appointment of the most qualified individual to the police chief position.

*Leave the position of police chief unfilled until existing leadership resources in the department are more fully developed*



### *B. Reforms necessary for adoption of community policing model*

- Continue to reduce the number of organizational silos within the Department so as to maximize the number of uniformed personnel assigned to neighborhood policing.

The Department must not re-create the organizational silos of the past. On the Commission's recommendation, the Department has moved away from its prior inefficient, ineffective structure of separate functional units known as "silos." The Commission is convinced the silo structure wasted the Department's scarce resources, substantially reduced communications between the units, and provided no geographic or neighborhood-based accountability. The Department must concentrate its uniformed officers in neighborhood policing assignments, with officers assigned to a designated neighborhood, working predictable shifts, and reporting to area or district commanders that are responsible and responsive to the neighborhoods they patrol, and who are accountable to their communities.

- Eliminate the use of policing tactics that are ineffective and offensive to the community. In consultation with the community at large, develop alternative tactics that effectively combat crime and disorder while building and preserving community support, trust and confidence.

The Department must utilize aggressive police tactics while remaining sensitive and responsive to the community's reactions to those tactics so that the methods used to reduce crime do not alienate the public. The Department as a whole, as well as some individual officers, have adopted tactics that offend parts of the community and are inconsistent with recognized and tried effective policing practices. For instance, the Department has permitted some undercover officers to wear modified ski masks to conceal their identity when participating in narcotics raids. Community members claim that some of those officers, unrestrained by effective oversight and supervision, and incapable of being recognized have engaged in unacceptable behavior and even misconduct. The Department must eliminate those ineffective practices that alienate important segments of the community, and must rely instead on practices that aggressively combat crime and garner community support.

- Require all field officers to successfully complete training in problem-solving police techniques and the problem-solving process.

The Department must require its personnel to successfully complete the training necessary to develop and hone effective problem-solving skills. The Department must equip its officers with the skills to recognize and effectively solve a wide variety of neighborhood crime and disorder problems, as the Department moves away from a 911-driven response model of policing. Many of the Department's calls are to a limited number of high-volume addresses. The Department's personnel must be skilled in problem-recognition and assessment, and in implementing effective intervention strategies to address the underlying problems that make a given area a high-crime location.

*Continue to reduce the number of organizational silos.*

*Eliminate the use of policing tactics that are ineffective and offensive to the community.*

*Require all field officers to successfully complete training in problem-solving police techniques*

*Vest the district commanders*

- Vest the district commanders of the policing districts with the full authority and responsibility to oversee and supervise all policing within their geographic areas.

In effective, 21<sup>st</sup> Century police forces, the patrol captains are not shift supervisors but are area managers. The Department must hold patrol captains responsible to and for their districts 24 hours a day. Under the Department's recently-adopted geographic orientation plan, the patrol captains have shouldered the effort of implementing changes, which have begun to pay dividends. In turn, the captains have gained recognition and stature as the single points of contact in their assigned areas. The captains are also involved in ongoing assessments of the new structure, and are helping to identify needed modifications that will serve to enhance effectiveness and efficiency. They are using real-time crime data to develop strategic responses to identified hot spots. They are learning how to utilize more fully community advisory groups that add a new and invaluable dimension to their crime-suppression strategies. Throughout this difficult period of change, the captains have demonstrated great dedication and professionalism, and are to be commended for their continuing efforts to enhance service delivery to their respective communities. The captains can and should be trusted to use wisely and effectively full authority and responsibility for all policing in their districts.

*Require district commanders to successfully complete sensitivity and cultural training*

- Require district commanders to successfully complete sensitivity and cultural training so that they may better understand and respond to the issues that concern their respective communities.

Law enforcement, vital though it is, is but one part of a comprehensive and effective crime reduction strategy. Community leaders, business owners, university staff, social service providers, and other organizations and individuals must come together to plan and implement effective, successful crime reduction strategies. Police Commanders must be prepared to engage fully in these strategy-planning sessions, contributing their own expertise while relying on the expertise and assistance of others whose efforts are as important to the success of a comprehensive strategy.

When police participate in collaborative efforts with the community, they tend to take a broader view of the issues, a salutary by-product of the collaborative approach. The City's leadership must require other agencies of government to join the police at such discussions, so that the police are not the only representative of government service engaged in collaborative efforts with the community at large. Requiring district commanders to successfully complete sensitivity and cultural training is a vital first step towards improving policing practices in Camden.

*C. Internal Organizational and Strategic Changes*

*Amend the 28-day plan*

- Amend the 28-day plan as required, to reflect the decentralized policing platform occurring under decentralized, accountable police managers.

Increased accountability and stronger links with the Camden communities will support and help to sustain the innovative and effective aspects of the 28-day plan, which rotated officers through high-crime neighborhoods in a programmed manner., providing for strong enforce-

ment, followed by maintenance of a disorder and crime free environment. The Department must modify the 28-day plan to provide for increased accountability for police performance on a neighborhood (or geographic) basis. Additionally, the Department must involve the community in the strategy- development process as it redesigns the 28-day plan. This will require that police commanders commit to active, working involvement in collaborative community sessions. These sessions must be true working meetings with the public. In these and all other community interactions, police commanders must seek and encourage the community's sustained, active engagement and support in problem-solving discussions. Only then will the net gain seen from the 28-day plan be sustainable.

- Improve internal communications in the Department so that all employees are fully informed of and understand the priorities and developments that impact their jobs.

The Department must improve communications between senior management and the rest of the Department. The Department's leadership must make itself highly visible and must interact regularly with officers at all levels of the Department. The Department must change certain antiquated and disruptive practices, such as conducting roll call in a building separate from the Department's administration. Top management, particularly the Police Director, the Chief of Police, and the Deputy Chiefs, must regularly attend roll calls and use such mechanisms to update officers on the status of new initiatives, results of analysis of statistics and intelligence, and proposed improvements. Such mechanics are also a good vehicle to listen to officers' concerns and to address the issues that impact them and consequently, the rate of crime in the city.

- Reorganize and strengthen the CompStat process to allow for performance management of the Department's crime-reduction efforts.

The Department must reorganize the CompStat process into a strong and robust performance-management tool. The system currently in place was adequate as an initial effort, but it cannot serve the Department's needs in the long run. Therefore, the Department must increase the system's functionality by basing it on data about performance and outcomes. A robust CompStat system must be capable of assisting the Department's middle- and upper-management in assessing the efficacy of crime control and problem-solving activities in the city's neighborhoods, in facilitating collaboration with community leaders, and in developing new strategies. It also must be capable of being used to share information on effective policing strategies among all of the Department's managers.

Eventually, the Department must ask other participants to join in the fight against crime in the city. Thus, it should invite other city agency representatives to CompStat meetings to develop interactions between the agencies that support the policing initiatives and strategies. Additionally, the Department should invite appropriate community representatives to participate, when appropriate, in the CompStat process, such as when problem-solving activities occurring in their neighborhoods are discussed.

An effective CompStat process must include the following components: data collection on performance outcomes; dissemination of the performance data to commanders on a regular basis; identification of priorities for each command assignment in the Department; weekly review

*Improve internal communications*

*Reorganize and strengthen the CompStat process*



*Institute a managerial accountability system*

of key performance measures; development of problem-solving strategies to address the problems of crime and disorder in each neighborhood; and collaboration with community leaders on joint initiatives focused on problem-solving objectives.

- Institute a managerial accountability system throughout the Department. Make commanders accountable for their supervision of their subordinates, and provide the commanders with clear authority so that they can be held accountable.

Camden must establish an effective system of managerial accountability. Police managers at all levels must be fully engaged in monitoring and evaluating their subordinates' performance, training, retraining, rewarding and disciplining them as needed to improve their effectiveness, morale and safety. The Department must give managers explicit authority to assign work, to evaluate subordinate performance, to establish reasonable deadlines and goals, and to act as coaches and mentors to their subordinates. Managers must be permitted to direct work so that they can be held accountable for the performance of their subordinates.

*Design and implement a performance management system*

- Design and implement a performance management system for all members of the Department that provides frequent and concrete feedback on each employee's work performance.

The Department must design a performance evaluation system based on its organizational goals. Without it, members of the Department have no way to adjust or improve their performance. The Department must implement an evaluation system that requires management to provide meaningful, constructive feedback to each employee that reports to them. A formal performance evaluation should be required at least twice a year, with informal, more frequent conferences as assignments and circumstances require.

*Adopt fixed-shift scheduling.*

- Adopt fixed-shift scheduling. Schedule personnel so that the number of officers on duty at any given time of the day corresponds to the level of crime occurrence. Fixed-shift scheduling will improve the Department's responsiveness to the city's needs and improve the health and safety of its members.

The Department must abandon the current rotating-shift schedule and adopt instead a fixed-shift schedule. Experience has shown that assigning each patrol officer to a fixed-shift schedule allows a police Department to better allocate its personnel to meet the crime-prevention and policing needs, taking into account peaks and valleys in demand. In contrast, the rotating-shift schedule, which Camden has continued to use, assigns the same number of officers to every shift is simply inefficient; it results in overstaffing during slow times of the day and understaffing during hours of peak demand. Fixed-shift scheduling also better serves the community, as it allows the community to build stronger relationships with the officers assigned to a specific shift. Current police research and the experiences of police agencies throughout the country show that officers working such a schedule report increased job satisfaction, experience less fatigue, use fewer sick days, and experience less stress in their personal and family lives. Changing to a fixed-shift schedule will require a true collaborative effort between senior management and the patrol members of the Department. Management must examine the current districting in the city to determine whether it should reduce the number of geographic districts to ensure that officers report to the same supervisor as

much as possible. Changing the manner of scheduling shifts will require the cooperation of the unions because the contract currently in place inexplicably provides for a rotating-shift schedule, a subject that is best reserved to the sound discretion of management.

- Improve communication between City government and the Department. The City's elected officials must share with the Department's leadership and all members an accurate and complete picture of the City's financial condition and the consequences of same.

The Commission found that Department employee expectations with regard to resources simply ignore the true nature of the city's dire financial circumstances. The Commission believes that, if police officers were fully informed and understood the City's true financial status, they would understand that Camden cannot compete with wealthier communities, and that they cannot compare themselves to their counterparts in those jurisdictions. Understandably, the rank and file are eager for a change in work conditions, equipment and resources. However, the city alone cannot meet these expectations. Camden is a poor city; it lacks the financial resources available to other more affluent communities in Camden County. Members of the Department must recognize the seriousness of the city's fiscal situation and not expect large infusions of funding to bring the latest technology and systems to the agency. That is not to say that the Department and its systems cannot be greatly improved and upgraded; but the members of the Department must be sensitive to the reality of the Camden environment. The cost of providing police services constitutes a large portion of the very limited, and shrinking, resources available to the City. Simply put, the Commission urges all members of the Department to be realistic about Camden's fiscal situation and patient with its ability to respond to the Department's resource needs, which are, admittedly, considerable.

- Establish District Collaborative Councils as the basis for strong collaboration with residents and the business community in Camden's neighborhoods and ensure that police commanders and supervisors are actively involved in problem-solving and strategy development with the Councils.

The management of the Department, including the Deputy Chiefs and Captains, must look outside internal policing operations and must embrace a community that is greatly concerned about crime and the deteriorating conditions in Camden. Indeed, the energy of these concerned citizens in Camden is one of the City's greatest strengths, and the Department should endeavor to harness it into constructive, collaborative action. This can only occur if the managers in the Department commit themselves to working in tandem with those in the community who are ready, willing and able to partner with the Department in the fight against crime.

This collaborative relationship must build on the efforts of existing citywide public safety community organizations that can serve as resources to address public safety issues, especially those that require a citywide response. Additionally, the Department must reach out to underserved populations and neighborhoods throughout the city as a matter of priority, and must be prepared to address language barriers and other access issues. In public housing and neighborhoods without organized neighborhood groups, many people feel "left out of the loop." To address Camden's crime problem successfully, the Department's management must develop collaborative relationships with these constituents as well.

*Improve communication between City government and the Department.*

*Establish District Collaborative Councils*

Effective collaboration with the community requires a mechanism for bringing the community and police together to discuss neighborhood priorities and to develop jointly strategies intended to address those priorities. To its credit, the Department, with the assistance of members of the Commission and the Office of the Camden County Prosecutor, has begun a process for the formation of District Collaborative Councils in each of the policing districts.

It is essential that district commanders and their Lieutenants attend the meetings of the District Collaborative Councils, and that a directive be issued requiring such attendance. Issues discussed and agreements reached at Council meetings should be included in a summary report to be distributed to members of the Command Staff to keep them informed of the progress made at these discussions. Relevant information derived from these meetings should be made available to officers working in the particular Council's District. Additionally, the CompStat process should incorporate relevant information gathered at these meetings in reviewing neighborhood policing performance and requirements.

At the conclusion of these meetings, the agreed-upon list of policing actions and community actions should be preserved on a flip chart and documented in minutes of the meeting. These actions, of course, will inform decisions on policing strategy. At each meeting, both community and police officers should review previous agreements and report on the status of implementation. Finally, these meetings must serve as the forum for community input into the crime reduction efforts of the Department. Having this input will greatly strengthen the impact and the effectiveness of the strategies adopted under the original 28-day plan for crime control.

- Restructure the Detective Bureau to make it more pro-active and strategic in its approach to criminal investigation. Identify specific outcome goals and benchmarks for the Bureau, and measure the Bureau's performance in accomplishing the established goals.

### *Restructure the Detective Bureau*

The Department must reorient its investigative functions to reflect its commitment to intelligence-led policing. The Department must employ robust CompStat processes to detect and analyze crime patterns and develop appropriate intervention strategies. The Department must move away from measuring performance by arrest statistics and clearance rates, a system by now discarded by the majority of effective police forces. Instead, the Department must develop new benchmarks and new performance measures to evaluate the Bureau's success in developing and implementing effective interventions. An information-driven strategic approach to crime solving will allow the Department the intelligence and analysis to address not only serious, violent crimes, but also the far more prevalent, and almost never solved, property crimes. By identifying patterns and developing strategies, the Detective Bureau can contribute greatly to the Department's appropriate and efficient use of its policing resources. For example, many cases need not be routed to an investigative supervisor, but can be effectively managed in the field by uniformed personnel. Similarly, many reports can be taken by telephone, a move that would greatly expand the preventive benefit of maintaining an increased uniformed presence in the neighborhoods.

- Schedule regular labor-management working meetings to discuss labor issues. Ensure that the Department administration considers the perspective of the unions while protecting the management rights of the police executive.

The Department must foster an open, collaborative labor-management relationship that will facilitate implementation of improved policing practices. The reforms the Commission recommends in this report can provide substantial common ground for management and the other Department members. However, even where their positions do not coincide, honest, open communications and the exchange of reasonable explanations are far more important than the endless pursuit for agreement that, to date, has unduly prolonged decision making to the point that departmental direction and commitment to a stated course of action seems uncertain at best. Improving relations between management and the unions is a positive change in the Department's efforts to combat crime.

- Raise the Department's performance bar by preparing and applying for accreditation.

The Department should prepare and apply for accreditation, a process that will require the Department to develop and adopt high standards for professional objectives and procedures to meet those objectives. The Department could choose to seek accreditation through the New Jersey State Association of Chiefs of Police or through the national Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies. Accreditation will prove to the Department and all concerned, especially Camden residents, that the Camden Police Department has become an effective, professional law enforcement agency. The Commission recognizes that the process to gain accreditation will be arduous and will take time, perhaps a few years. But, if successful in this endeavor, the Department will be able to demonstrate its ability to carry out its mission effectively and efficiently, and to manage itself. While the process may take some time, the sooner it is started, the better.

*Schedule regular labor-management working meetings*

*Raise the Department's performance bar*

## **Conclusion**

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Camden's crime rate unfortunately defines it as a city in crisis. This is unacceptable, and Camden need not remain so. The reforms the Commission recommends in this report, key among them engaging the community in crime reduction efforts through collaboration with the Police Department, are not merely the elements of a good policing strategy. Rather, they are essential steps that the City and the Department must take if Camden is to reduce substantially its crime rate, as it must do, and ultimately enhance the lives of the people who reside, work and travel there.

The Camden Police Department is at a crossroads. It can make changes from the ground up that will impact the city and its citizens in a positive way. Or, it can stubbornly choose to remain static and thereby add to the City's ills. Of course, there can be only one choice. To the hard working, dedicated men and women of the Police Department in the City of Camden who will work to make that choice a reality, the citizens of Camden and the State will owe a debt of gratitude. The future is, for the most part, in their hands.